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ABSTRACT

A booklet designed to aid those who use agricultural campaigns in their educational and advisory programs is presented. It is pointed out that a good campaign works as a chain reaction, inciting enthusiasm among workers and planners. The five steps in a well-organized campaign are: (1) planning, (2) preparing people for their jobs, (3) producing materials, (4) launching and carrying out the campaign, and (5) evaluating the results. (CK)

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Agricultural advisory services throughout the world use campaigns to speed the adoption of improved farming and homemaking practices.

India's successful campaign to spread the Japanese method of rice cultivation is one example. Every available communication tool was used in this nation-wide effort. Farmers who now follow the Japanese method are obtaining greatly increased yields.

Germany's grassland improvment campaign is another example. In a country where more than 40 percent of the arable land is permanent grassland, the advisory service set out to show farmers how they could improve yields. An intensive, well-planned campaign assured its success.

A good educational campaign works as a chain reaction. The original planners provide energy and enthusiasm. This attracts additional supporters and new ideas. Each new supporter seeks others. Eventually, all potential workers and ideas are enlisted, and a total effort begins. Campaigns succeed when they follow this pattern, providing that there was a genuine recognized need to be satisfied or problem to be solved.

This booklet is designed to help those who use campaigns in their educational and advisory programs.

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This is one of a series of booklets designed to answer questions about agricultural communications.

The booklets were edited and published by the National Project in Agricultural Communications, East Lansing, Michigan, in cooperation with the Office of Food and Agriculture, International Cooperation Administration, Washington, D. C.

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FORAGE PROBLEM

IRRIGATION PROBLEM

MARKETING PROBLEM

FERTILIZER PROBLEM

FORAGE PROBLEM

SEED PROBLEM

The oftener people are exposed to a new idea, the more likely they are to adopt it. For example, a man may become aware of a new idea through a motion picture. At first he is only mildly interested, or even indifferent. But a few days later he hears the same idea on radio or television. He may hear about it again at an extension meeting. His fourth exposure to the idea might be in a newspaper story, leaflet, or in a conversation with a neighbor. By this time he is probably becoming receptive to the idea and is perhaps even ready to give it a try.

It is on this principle that educational campaigns are based. A campaign is a coordinated use of different methods of communication aimed at focusing attention on a particular problem—and its solution—over a period of time.

Not all problems are adapted to campaign treatment. To determine whether or not a campaign is justified, ask yourself the following questions: Is the problem important to a large number of people? Can the problem be solved without major or complicated adjustments by the farmer? Can a definite time limit be set for the duration of the campaign? Is it possible to establish campaign goals and to measure progress toward these goals?

If the campaign technique is so effective, why not have a campaign in every field of extension work? There are several reasons.

First of all, most extension services do not have enough funds or a large enough staff to conduct several campaigns at one time. Also, communication outlets, such as newspapers, magazines, and radio stations can cooperate only as far as space, time, or other facilities are available. With several campaigns operating simultaneously, one extension campaign would compete with another for available space and time.

Finally, if farm people are to be impressed with the message of a particular campaign, it is not wise to divert their attention to other problems. Several campaigns aimed at the same people at one time tend to confuse them and compete for their attention.

In short, the fewer extension campaigns underway at any one time, the more likely that each will succeed.

There are five important steps in educational campaigns as they are used in agricultural extension programs: (1) planning the campaign; (2) preparing people for their jobs; (3) producing materials; (4) launching and carrying out the campaign; and (5) evaluating the results.

Once the decision has been made that a problem warrants a campaign, it is time to develop detailed plans. The success of a campaign depends largely on careful and thoughtful planning at the start.

Set up a committee. The planning should be done by a campaign team or steering committee of administrators, subject-matter specialists, information specialists, and local extension workers. This same team should continue to guide the progress of the campaign to its end and evaluate the results.

As the campaign progresses, it may be desirable to enlarge the original committee by adding some outstanding farmers, businessmen, civic and religious leaders, and representatives of state or government agencies and youth groups. This provides a wider range of experience and thinking from which to draw in developing the campaign—as well as the active or implied support of the groups represented. Eventually, when you have enlisted cooperators at all levels and in all fields of interest, you have completed your campaign organization.

Establish the objectives. The planning committee should first establish the purpose, objectives, and expected outcomes of the educational program. A campaign without purpose is wasteful and meaningless, and can hurt future efforts. The campaign must be consistent with extension policies and with the long-range program for the area.

Clear-cut objectives will help campaign workers to: (1) establish specific goals; (2) prepare the budget; (3) set a time limit; (4) plan effective use of teaching and communication methods; and (5) define the special target audiences so that appropriate appeals and approaches can be planned.

Schedule the activities. At an early planning meeting, set a time limit on the campaign. How long a campaign should run depends on many factors—the people you want to reach, the communication out-

lets and extension teaching methods available, the budget, and, to an even greater degree, the subject matter itself. Most extension campaigns run several months. But campaigns on complex or difficult problems may last longer.

With the time limit set, the steering committee can schedule activities. They may, for example, want to establish demonstration plots in different parts of the state; conduct a series of tours and demonstrations; plan a statewide short course or a conference at the state college of agriculture. Subject-matter and information specialists can time the preparation and distribution of educational materials and can decide how best to coordinate the different communication methods.

It will help you to plan activities and prepare effective materials if you keep in mind the general pattern that agricultural educators and extension workers usually follow in urging farmers to accept a new practice or idea:

Inform people about the discovery or development of a new practice.

Interest people in the possible application of the practice to their farming or other operations.

Inspire people to want to try the new practice, at least in a small way. Give convincing reasons, such as the successful experience of other farmers who have tried the practice.

Instruct people in the actual steps, processes, mechanics, and materials involved in making the application or adopting the practice.

Remember that, unless the subject matter is extremely new, your audience will range all the way from people who never heard of the new practice to those who have already tried it, whether successfully or unsuccessfully.

The tempo of activities is important. Usually the action part of a campaign can be divided into four stages: kick-off, build-up, smash, and follow-through. Successful campaigns are timed and paced so that the smash, complete with how-to-do-it information, reaches the farmer just before it is time for him to act.

Select the media. As you plan the various steps of the campaign, consider which of the various communication media can best be used to inform, interest, inspire, and instruct the audience.

Be sure to get the best possible results for your money and effort. Not all communication channels may be suited to or available for a particular campaign. List the advantages and disadvantages of every available medium. Plan to use as many of the most effective available media as possible.

You may find that a needed item, such as a color motion picture, is too expensive for your budget. An interested commercial concern, however, may be glad to contribute the money.

Deciding what is to be presented through each communication channel at various stages of the campaign is the heart of your overall coordinated plan.

Prepare a budget. How much money you have available may be the deciding factor in your choice of various methods of communication. So a budget should be approved by the administration and funds set aside as soon as possible.

It may be that an administrator will set aside a definite sum and will ask for suggestions on using it to the best advantage. Or he may ask for a list of the proposed activities and an estimate of costs.

Allow at least 10 per cent of the budget for miscellaneous expenses. In every campaign there will be new ideas, increased costs, last-minute shifts in media, and other changes which cannot be foreseen at the time of budget planning.

Prepare a handbook. One of the many tasks of campaign planning is to bring together in one handbook all the available, pertinent knowledge about the subject. This is a job for subject-matter and communication specialists. Together they should plan, organize, and prepare a campaign handbook or "book of facts."

Compiling such a handbook can be the most time-consuming part of campaign planning. Yet the success or failure of all activities depends on how thoroughly this job is done. It will provide the raw material and the basis for coordinating all campaign activities. Con-

sequently, make it the product of the best cooperative thinking of the entire campaign team.

Among the things to include in the handbook are the following:

1. Compilation of all subject-matter information needed for the campaign.
2. A thorough examination of the problem and detailed information on the solution.
3. Practical advice for farmers on the part they can play and the practices they should follow.
4. Benefits to the state, region, or nation resulting from a successful campaign.
5. Details relating to the aims of the campaign, the time limits, ways of reaching desired audiences, communication media to be used.
6. List of organizations that are potential cooperators or supporters.
7. List of available teaching aids, such as films, scripts, photographs, exhibits.

Plan to evaluate. Provide in the plan a budget for measuring and evaluating the campaign's effectiveness.

A successful campaign requires the active participation and cooperation of a great many people. To make their best contribution, these people need accurate, definite information.

Encourage an information-minded staff. Your campaign starts with members of the state staff. They are the ones who will furnish much of the basic information. To do this most effectively, they will need to be kept up-to-date on the plans and progress of the campaign. Keep them informed by reporting all plans at committee and organization meetings or through staff publications and letters. Talk with staff members frequently. Remind them to supply facts and ideas for news stories, radio talks, TV programs, publications, and visuals.

These internal campaign tasks are as important as the external ones of preparing information for your target audience.

Train campaign workers. County and district extension workers and other members of the campaign organization need information that will enable them to carry out their parts of the work effectively. This can be supplied through regional or local training schools.

Include training on both subject matter and communication skills. Subject-matter specialists, using the campaign handbook as a textbook, can provide information on all phases of the problem and its solution. Information specialists can teach campaign workers how to make the best use of available channels of communication.

When extension agents are trained and encouraged to produce information materials for local use, the effectiveness of the campaign is increased. Take, for example, the production of news stories for a recent forage campaign in the state of Vermont. While the state information staff of three editors produced 151 news and feature stories, the 14 county extension agents put out 1,500 stories. The same pattern was true in the total number of radio talks made and bulletins and circular letters distributed.

Not only did extension workers produce more materials than the state staff, but local newspaper editors and radio broadcasters often found that these materials, because of their local application and interest, were more usable.

Train community leaders. Training schools can also be used to acquaint outstanding farmers with the reasons for the campaign. Invite farmers who are community leaders to attend these schools. Ask them to pass along the information to their neighbors.

When a progressive farmer tells his neighbor that he likes a certain way of planting seed or harvesting hay, the neighbor often tries it. Local leaders can thus add greatly to the success of campaigns.

Give each of these schools local support through the press, radio, magazines, circular letters, and other available media.

Keep businessmen informed. Special meetings or schools for interested businessmen will help to make the campaign successful. For example, in a better-roughage campaign, subject-matter specialists might conduct regional meetings for feed, seed, and fertilizer dealers. Farmers often rely on these dealers for advice about which seeds and fertilizers to use. Therefore, it is important that the dealers' suggestions fit in with those made by the extension service.

Inform communication outlets. The success of your campaign will depend partly on the cooperation of newspaper editors, radio and TV broadcasters, and people in charge of other outlets of communication. Make sure these people understand the reasons for the campaign—what the problem is and why the solution is important to the state, community, and nation. Tell them about your plans and elaborate on some of the major events that will take place. Before the campaign starts, mimeograph or print this material so that editors, writers, and broadcasters can use it easily.

Whenever possible, discuss the campaign with the editors and other communication people in person.

What information materials are needed and when they will be needed are determined when you are planning the campaign. But getting the

materials written, edited, illustrated, produced, and distributed—on schedule and within the budget—requires systematic administration and careful attention to detail.

List all the items planned for the campaign, and establish a budget for each item. Prepare a schedule for obtaining basic facts from staff members, for editing, illustrating, and production. Assign definite responsibilities to individuals for each step in the schedule. Determine dates or points for checking and coordinating materials before proceeding further; make known who has authority for making different kinds of decisions.

Such attention to detail not only gets the materials out on time but also helps to keep the campaign within or under the established budget by avoiding duplications, omissions, costly corrections, and "rush" productions at overtime rates.

Careful planning will help to cut costs in other ways. For example, photographs and illustrations developed for a publication may be used for other purposes throughout the campaign. This means giving attention originally to such details as size, shape, color, and possible methods of reproduction.

When a number of small leaflets, posters, or similar materials are to be used in a campaign, consolidation of all of these into a single printing job may greatly cut printing costs. Similarly, if local units plan to prepare and publish campaign materials, they can often produce better materials at lower costs if they are supplied with reproducible art, outlines, or other needed aids. It may also be desirable to arrange for central printing of such locally produced materials.

Distribute materials. Mailing lists of individuals and organizations to receive campaign materials should be prepared when the campaign is planned. Basic lists of newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations, and other information outlets are, of course, essential. Check these lists to make sure they are complete and accurate.

For any specific campaign, you will usually need to compile special lists of individuals, interested business firms, and other groups

not ordinarily reached by extension mailings, to whom you will want to send circular letters, questionnaires, promotional booklets, and other materials as the campaign progresses.

Alert communication outlets. Once the campaign is ready to start, alert all communication outlets. Remind them of your purpose and plans. Bring them up-to-date on developments that may have occurred since you originally contacted them.

Kick-off meeting. Focus public attention on the start of a campaign with a "kick-off" meeting. Invite everyone who has an interest in the campaign. Send special invitations to editors, reporters, broadcasters, and other people representing different media of communication. These people must be convinced that the meeting is worth attending and reporting. So arrange events of real news value for the meeting. Describe some of these events in your invitations to the people representing communications media.

One of the most successful ways of making news with a kick-off meeting is to have well-known celebrities take part in the program. Another method of reaching the public eye and ear is to have the governor proclaim a special day, week, or month. "Green Pastures Week," "Dairy Day," "National Health Month," and "Rural Youth Week" are examples.

Announcements of campaign contests, slogans, catch phrases, press tours, and special parades or gatherings are well known methods of attracting public attention. These can be used singly or in combination at the kick-off meeting.

Careful planning and attention to details will pay off in good coverage of the meeting. Make certain that adequate facilities are available for media representatives. Provide a pressroom with typewriters and other supplies. Make available advance copies of all major speeches, and arrange for both live and recorded radio and television coverage, if possible.

Keep special props on hand for photographers, and arrange for special photographs. For example, in a forage campaign, the governor could be photographed sowing a new grass seed or holding a giant bottle of milk labeled, "Better Forage Means More Milk."

After the campaign kick-off, send "thank you" letters to media representatives who attended and to all others who cooperated with your campaign committee in planning the event.

Build-up, smash, and follow-through. After you have launched the campaign, informing people about the need for a certain line of action, you need to maintain their interest so they will be ready for the smash part of the campaign—or the part that inspires them to take action. Exactly how you will do this and when you will give your broadcasts, make your special mailings, and release your various news stories and other materials should have been decided in your campaign planning. The smash should come just before it is time for the farmer to act. Be sure that by this time the farmer has all the information he needs to take action successfully.

After the smash comes the follow-through. Sometimes additional subject-matter material may be needed for this part of the campaign. If you have been encouraging the adoption of a new crop variety, for example, your smash may come just before planting time. But you will probably want to follow this with information on cultivation, weed control, and harvesting methods. Progress reports and stories about individual farmers who have successfully adopted the recommendations of the campaign are also part of the follow-through.

Evaluation

Evaluation should be a continuous process. Most campaign teams check the effectiveness of their efforts throughout the campaign. The main job of evaluation, however, comes after the campaign has ended. Even then, all the campaign results may not be evident. It often takes years to change established practices.

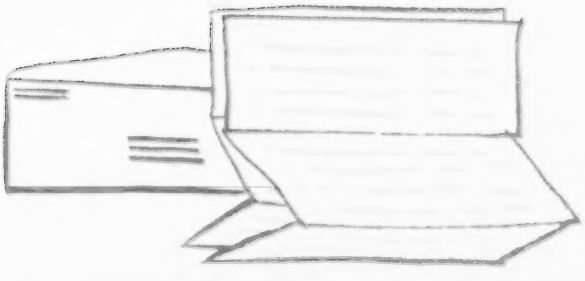
Evaluation has the primary purpose of judging the effectiveness of a particular campaign. But in addition, it can yield information that will be useful in conducting future campaigns.

Before trying to evaluate the results of a campaign, consider these points:

What is to be measured? What changes are expected in knowledge, attitude, understanding, practices, skills, interests, or needs?

Who is expected to make these changes?

What evidences can be noted that the changes were made?



A variety of means can be used to collect information. Available money and manpower may largely determine what methods will be used.

Collect as much information as you can directly from the campaign audience. Personal interviews, a discussion or show of hands at meetings, and mailed questionnaires are some of the ways in which the audience can be sampled. Try to determine not only the percentage of the audience adopting recommended ideas or practices, but also the campaign methods or combination of methods that were most influential.

Another type of evaluation can be conducted within the campaign organization itself. Ask each member for his opinions on the effectiveness of the campaign and for suggestions to improve future campaigns. This type of evaluation may reveal flaws in planning, organizing, and production that can be avoided in future campaigns.

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